

**Testimony before the Labor Committee
January 31, 2013**



Re: S.B. 387, An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

Submitted by Lisa Roger, Family Self-Sufficiency Manager, Norwalk Housing Authority, lroger@norwalkha.org, 203-838-8471 X188

Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Roger, and I'm the Family Self-Sufficiency Manager at the Norwalk Housing Authority. Our team of three serves approximately 1500 low-income families in public housing and subsidized rental Section 8 housing. We help residents with their needs including employment, education, childcare, and more to enable them to become more economically independent.

USA.com ranked Connecticut as the state with the fourth highest median household income at \$64,576. This was based on 2010 data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). Also according to ACS, while the median household income for the city of Norwalk was \$76,161, the median income of the South Norwalk Census tract (044100) where most NHA residents reside was \$39,493. Finally, in comparison, the average income of all NHA family households with an average family size of 2.5 persons is \$19,841.

Many people wrongly assume that only high school kids or drop-outs receive minimum wage at \$8.25 per hour. The fact is that 10% of all workers in Connecticut earn less than \$9.75 per hour, the proposed minimum wage rate for July 2014. Of these, 80% are 20 years and older, and 80% have at least a high school diploma.

Sara is a Norwalk Housing Authority resident in her mid-fifties and works part-time at a major retailer as a cashier. Sara has a 20-year old unemployed son who had also been working as a cashier. Both Sara and her son have their high school diplomas. Although Sara has requested a full-time job, her employer has repeatedly denied her request. At almost minimum wage, Sara's annual salary had been approximately \$16,000 per year. Her hours are inconsistent making it difficult for her to take on a second job or advance her education and improve her English because her schedule is constantly changing. In the past, she requested a schedule change that would allow her to take English classes. She was reprimanded with a significant cut in hours. If the minimum wage increased this year, her salary could increase by \$1,000 annually and could help her to better make ends meet.

CESAR RAMIREZ
Chairman

JEFFREY INGRAHAM
Vice Chairman

BERNADINE TATEM
Treasurer

BEVERLY KRIEGER
Commissioner

LARRY KATZ
Commissioner

CURTIS O. LAW
Executive Director

CANDACE E. MAYER
Deputy Director

LATTARULO LAW FIRM, LLC
General Counsel

UNITED WAY
COMMUNITY PARTNER

Housing Authority of the City of Norwalk
P.O. Box 508, 24 1/2 Monroe Street, Norwalk, Connecticut 06856-0508
203-838-8471 . Fax 203-838-6535. TDD 1-800-545-1833 ext. 437
www.norwalkha.org
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Thank you, Representative Tercyak, Senator Osten and members of the committee for allowing me this opportunity to come before you to speak on behalf of Sara and other low-income people in my home state of Connecticut. As residents of Connecticut, we each have a vested interest in helping our friends and families succeed during these difficult economic times.